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## **Senator Cardin Joins USDA in Announcing 13 Grants to Fund Energy Efficiency Projects to help Maryland Farmers and Rural Businesses**

WESTMINSTER, MD – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) today joined U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development State Director Jack Tarburton and U.S. Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (MD-6) to announce that USDA Rural Development is providing grants for 13 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in Maryland under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The announcement was made at Sunnyside Farms, Inc., a major chicken-egg production facility in Carroll County. Sunnyside will receive a \$220,500 grant from USDA for a solar system project.

“Sunnyside Farms’ solar energy project is a model for how agricultural businesses can utilize renewable energy to save money and help our nation become less dependent on foreign oil,” said **Senator Cardin**. “Our nation’s economic future depends on becoming as energy efficient as possible and agriculture and farming have an important role in showing the business community how alternative, renewable energy can work and make a difference.”

The USDA grant to Sunnyside represents approximately 25% of the total cost of the new solar system that is installed adjacent to the operation’s chicken egg barns. A total of 936 solar panels of 220 watts each make up the grid-tied array. The total land space covered is approximately 1 acre.

The solar system is expected to produce approximately 25 percent of the electricity used by the farm, which qualifies Sunnyside for a \$50,000 grant from the Maryland Energy Administration, in addition to a 30 percent Federal Investment Tax Credit and Renewable Energy Credits. The Sunnyside Solar system is currently the largest farm-based, grid-tied, ground-mounted solar system in Maryland.

Also announced today by the USDA were grants totaling \$747,994 for 13 recipients. The funding includes support to help farmers and rural small businesses make energy efficiency improvements to their operations.

REAP funding can be used for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies, energy audits, and renewable energy development assistance. Funding is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. Listed below is a complete list of Maryland REAP recipients announced today.

- Bright Helmstone Farms, Inc., Massey - \$20,000 grain dryer replacement
- Enviro-Organic Technologies, Inc., New Windsor - \$19,875 wind turbine
- Jay McGinnis, White Hall - \$19,984 grain dryer replacement
- Rigdon Farms, Inc., Jarrettsville - \$20,000 grain dryer replacement
- Rolling Vale Farms, Inc., Accident - \$19,989 grain dryer replacement
- Shadow Mere Arabians, LLC, Marriottsville - \$29,970 solar system
- Sunnyside Farms, Inc., Westminster - \$220,500 solar system
- John N. Sussman, Westminster - \$19,999 grain dryer replacement
- Taylor and Sons, Berlin - \$14,432 grain dryer replacement
- Wirtz & Daughters, Inc., Joppa - \$19,169 solar system
- LNH Enterprises, Oldtown, MD - \$19,139 for a wind turbine
- Southern Maryland Electric Coop, Hughesville, MD - \$300,000 for a geo thermal system
- Sunny Ridge Farm (Laytonsville, MD) - \$24,937 for a grain dryer

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities. Last year, the agency returned more \$329 million to rural Maryland.

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